

REMARKS

In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, reconsideration and further examination are requested.

Minor editorial amendments have been made to the specification. No new matter has been added.

Claim 1 has been amended herein. Therefore, claims 1 and 2 remain pending.

Claim 1 has been rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claim 1 of U.S. Patent 7,338,337. This rejection is traversed and is inapplicable to claim 1 as amended for the following reasons.

In claim 1 of US 7,338,337, when a voltage is applied so that scan electrodes may be at a higher voltage over sustain electrodes, and when a voltage is applied so that sustain electrodes may be at a higher voltage over the scan electrodes, it is a required condition that aging should be executed by applying the voltage for suppressing erase-discharge occurring after the aging discharge to at least one of the scan electrodes and sustain electrodes. In U.S. 7,338,337, the period of applying the voltage so that the scan electrodes may be higher than in the sustain electrodes is equated by the Examiner with the first aging period in claim 1 of the present application, while, in U.S. 7,338,337, the period of applying the voltage so that the sustain electrodes may be higher than in the scan electrodes is equated by the Examiner with the second aging period in claim 1 of the present application. Accordingly, claim 1 has been amended to clarify the invention and avoid the possibility of a claim construction that the first aging period and the second aging period have a duration of a half period.

Claim 1 has also been amended to avoid the possibility of a claim construction wherein both discharge A (the first self erase discharge) and discharge b (the second self erase discharge) are suppressed in each of the first aging period and the second aging period, by explicitly reciting that the first self erase discharge is suppressed in the first aging period and reciting that the second self erase discharge is suppressed in the second aging period.

Since the claims of U.S. 7,338,337 do not recite these features of claim 1 as amended, it is

submitted that claim 1 is allowable over U.S. 7,338,337.

Claim 1 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hashimoto (US 2002/0008680) in view of Sugimoto (US 2004/0070575). Claim 2 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hashimoto in view of Sugimoto and Yoo (US 7,713,374). These rejections are traversed for the following reasons.

In the driving waveform of PDP shown in Fig. 7 of Hashimoto, the sustain pulse applied positively is lowered to a minus level in the falling process, then the effect of self-erase discharge can be further pulled up. The pulse once pulled down to a minus level is called an assistant pulse to the self-erase discharge. The assistant pulse for the self-erase discharge is a pulse to be superposed on the self-erase discharge (lines 19-21 of [0181]), and is a pulse for assisting generation of self-erase discharge. By contrast, in the present invention as recited in claim 1, the voltage for suppressing self-discharge is the voltage for suppressing the self-erase discharge occurring together with aging discharge, and hence the voltage for suppressing self-erase discharge in the present invention as recited in claim 1 is completely different from the self-erase assistant pulse of Hashimoto.

Considering Hashimoto together with Sugimoto, by using the driving method of Hashimoto when aging, the Examiner asserts that it would have been obvious to obtain the effects of the present invention. However, combining the teachings of Hashimoto and Sugimoto does not result in the invention recited in claim 1 or the effects thereof. Accordingly, claim 1 as amended would not have been obvious to a person having ordinary skill in the art in view of Hashimoto and Sugimoto under 35 USC 103(a).

Moreover, the Yoo reference does not provide the disclosure missing from Hashimoto and Sugimoto of the features recited in claim 1 as amended. Accordingly, no obvious combination of the teachings of Hashimoto, Sugimoto, and Yoo would have resulted in the invention recited in claims 1 or 2. Accordingly, claim 2 would not have been considered obvious to a person having ordinary skill in the art under 35 U.S.C 103(a) in view of Hashimoto, Sugimoto, and Yoo.

In view of the above, it is submitted that claims 1 and 2 as amended herein are allowable over the prior art of record. It is further submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone to resolve any remaining issues.

Respectfully submitted,

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